

**Cops can't question Charles Morais's lawyer, says Ambiga  
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Police cannot question lawyer Americk Sidhu for what his client Charles Morais did as it violates the rights guaranteed under the Federal Constitution, says National Human Rights Society Malaysia (Hakam) president Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan.

Ambiga today said Americk was protected by the principle of effective legal representation, which included the right to privileged communication.

"There cannot be effective legal representation if there is no privileged communication. This means every police officer has a duty to protect this inherent right," she said in a statement.

Ambiga added that the inspector-general of police's (IGP) "uncalled-for defamatory remarks" against Americk reeked of harassment of a lawyer in the course of his duties.

IGP Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar told the New Straits Times the lawyer had a bad reputation when it came to statutory declarations (SD), and this was not the first time Americk's client had disappeared after coming out with an SD.

Khalid was referring to Charles who had left for the United States on Thursday after releasing an SD alleging that the murder of his brother Datuk Kevin Morais was linked to the preparation of a charge sheet to prosecute a prominent political leader for corruption.

In 2008, Americk prepared the first SD for private investigator P. Balasubramaniam which implicated Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and several others in the 2006 murder of Mongolian Altantuya Shaariibuu.

The next day, Balasubramaniam signed a second declaration and retracted the first SD. He and his family left the country and returned in 2013 but Balasubramaniam died of a heart attack soon after.

Ambiga said today that IGP's personal attacks on Americk and Charles, whom he had previously labelled a coward, raised concerns about Khalid's lack of independence.

"It is imperative that IGP step aside and allow for the investigations to be undertaken by an officer who will act without fear or favour.

"This is necessary to uphold the independence of the police force and to assure the public that a thorough and unbiased investigation will be carried out into the allegations in the statutory declaration."

She also urged Putrajaya to ensure lawyers were not intimidated, harassed or interfered with in the course of discharging their professional duties. – December 1,

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